

St. Agnes Columbarium Garden



ST. AGNES COLUMBARIUM GARDEN

Frequently Asked questions

Q. What is a columbarium?

A. A columbarium is an arrangement of niches into which an urn or urns containing the cremated remains of deceased are placed for permanent inurnment (interment). See the images of the St. Agnes Columbarium on the front and back covers.

The Church and Cremation

Q. As a Catholic, may I be cremated?

A. Yes. In 1963, the Vatican's Holy Office (now known as the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith) lifted the prohibition forbidding Catholics to choose cremation. This permission was incorporated into the revised *Code of Canon Law* of 1983, and its liturgies were written in the *Order of Christian Funerals*. At that time, it was standard practice to celebrate the funeral liturgies with the body present and have the body cremated following the ceremony. More recently, however, the bishops of the United States and the Holy See have authorized the celebration of a Catholic Funeral Liturgy with just the cremated remains present.

Q. Do I need to ask permission to be cremated?

A. No, but one should inform your Pastor of your intention.

Q. May anything be added to cremated remains such as cremated remains of other persons, pets or objects?

A. No. The principle of respect for the cremated remains of a deceased Christian embraces the deeper belief in the individuality of each baptized person before God. Throughout history, the mingling of cremains has never been an accepted practice.

Q. When should cremation take place?

A. Cremation may take place before or after the Funeral Liturgy. If the body is present for the Funeral Liturgy, then there will be added expenses for embalming, casket rental and transport, etc. These costs are avoided if the body is cremated immediately after death.

Q. Can my cremated remains be scattered as I choose rather than inurned in a columbarium?

A. Because the church believes in the sacred destiny of the human person, remains are not to be scattered, kept at home or divided up, but are to be treated with the upmost respect, and entombed just as the body.

About Cremation

Q. Who decides if I am to be cremated?

A. You should make the decision while you are alive. However, your survivors could decide for you if your desires are not previously known.

Q. How do I make my wishes known?

A. You may make your wishes known by informing the person who will be responsible for your funeral arrangements, or in documents available from a funeral director designed to help plan and prepare your funeral. It is not a good idea to specify your funeral arrangements in your will because it may not be read until sometime after the funeral.

Q. Must I honor my parent's or spouse's desire for cremation?

A. Out of respect for a loved one, you will want to do all you can to carry out the wishes of the deceased concerning funeral services, provided they are in keeping with Church practice.

Q. Is it necessary to embalm?

A. When cremation is to follow soon after death, embalming is not necessary. When cremation follows the Funeral Liturgy, embalming is usually required.

Q. Is it necessary to purchase a casket if I am to be cremated?

A. No. It is not necessary to purchase a casket for cremation. If you choose to have the body present for the Funeral Mass with cremation later, then rental of a casket is an option. Most funeral directors offer casket rental.

Q. What is the proper container for cremated remains?

A. The U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy has determined that urns are to be simple and unadorned. Ostentatious urns and statuary are not appropriate Catholic funeral practices. It is also unacceptable to have any part of the cremated remains made into jewelry, art works, etc.

Q. If I choose cremation, is it necessary to call a funeral home?

A. Yes. A registered funeral director always performs the cremation. It is important to note that you are not required to have a viewing of the body at the funeral home.

Q. Can a family member be present at the cremation?

A. Although not customarily done, family members may choose to be present during cremation.

Q. How are the cremated remains transported to the church?

A. Typically, the cremated remains are delivered directly to the church by

the funeral director at the time of the funeral.

Q. Must cremated remains be buried or inurned?

A. Yes. Respectful disposition of cremated remains requires burial or inurnment.

Q. If I choose to be cremated, what are the advantages of choosing the St. Agnes Columbarium as opposed to a cemetery?

A. This is a personal choice. One may choose to be inurned in the St. Agnes Columbarium because of a strong desire to be laid to rest on the grounds of the church that one has loved and served. Proximity makes it convenient for visits by loved ones, and for periods of meditation and reflection. Also, the cost of inurnment in a columbarium is usually considerably less than the cost of burial at a cemetery. At St. Agnes, care of the grounds surrounding the Columbarium Garden will be tastefully and continually maintained.

Q. Where is St. Agnes' Columbarium Garden located?

A. The Columbarium Garden is built on church grounds adjacent to the west end of the St. Agnes church building and its Reservation Chapel. This location provides a peaceful and reserved setting for grieving, prayer and meditation.

Q. My spouse is not a Catholic and I want to be buried with my spouse. Are there any provisions whereby we can be placed in the same niche?

A. Yes. Each niche may hold two urns. You and your non-Catholic spouse can be placed in the same columbarium niche.

Q. Who may be inurned in the St. Agnes Columbarium?

A. This columbarium is intended primarily for the parishioners of St. Agnes Church. Therefore, any registered member of the parish may reserve niches and/or a Memorial Wall space for themselves and also may reserve a niche and/or a Memorial Wall space for family members who are not parishioners. The family members do not have to be Catholic. The Columbarium Committee has the authority to grant exceptions to this policy.

Q. What is the cost to reserve a niche?

A. As of 2022, the cost to reserve a niche which can accommodate two urns is \$6,000 in phase I section and \$6,500 for our recently completed phase II. This includes the engraving of the faceplate, opening and closing of the niche for inurnment, and the ongoing care and maintenance of the Columbarium Garden. It is possible that the cost could increase in future years.

Q. May more than two people be inurned in a niche?

A. No.

Q. Do I supply my own urn?

A. Yes. Before purchasing an urn, please contact the Parish Office to obtain information on the maximum size dimensions and the recommended urn material.

Q. What happens if I reserve a niche in the columbarium, then move away?

A. As long as no remains have been placed in the niche, the original reservation cost, less any incurred expenses including the endowment fee of up to 20%, will be refunded.

Q. May I decorate the area next to my niche with flowers?

A. No. The columbarium site will be perpetually maintained in a manner designed to be beautiful, serene, and edifying.

Q. How are niches assigned?

A. You may request a specific niche and it will be assigned to you if it has not already been reserved.

Funeral Rites

Q. What funeral rites are celebrated when a person is cremated?

A. In the *Order of Christian Funerals*, the United States bishops have included prayers that are used when the cremated remains are present in a church. The following rituals may be celebrated:

- Prayers After Death
- Gathering in the Presence of the Body
- Vigil for the Deceased
- Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass
- Rite of Committal

Q. Do I need permission to have cremated remains in church for the funeral liturgy?

A. One should advise the Pastor of the church where the Funeral Liturgy will take place of the intentions of the deceased or of your intentions.

Q. What duration of time occurs between death, cremation, and the Funeral Mass?

A. This depends on various factors such as the place of death, scheduling a time for cremation, the Church calendar, and the schedule of the parish. Consult your funeral director and the parish office for details.

Q. What happens at the Funeral Liturgy with cremated remains?

A. A journey, which began at baptism, comes to conclusion as we enter into eternal life. Significant attention should be given to the primary symbols of

the Catholic Funeral Liturgy as stated in the *Order of Christian Funerals* and its commentaries. The paschal candle and sprinkling with holy water are primary symbols of baptism and will be used during the Mass. The cremated remains are treated with the same dignity and respect as a deceased body. The remains are sealed in an urn, and set on a table located in front of the altar where the coffin would normally be placed. Photos and other mementos may be used at a vigil but are generally not appropriate during the Funeral Liturgy.

Q. How much time elapses from the Funeral Mass until the remains are inurned in the columbarium?

A. The remains are usually inurned in the columbarium immediately after the Funeral Mass.

Q. Is a ritual conducted when the remains are interred in a columbarium?

A. Yes. The Rite of Committal is very similar to the service conducted at a gravesite in a cemetery.

St. Agnes Columbarium Garden Memorial Wall

Q. My family members are buried in another city. May I remember them in the St. Agnes Columbarium Garden?

A. Yes. There is a Memorial Wall in the garden on which the names of individuals, couples, or family names of deceased loved ones who are buried elsewhere may be inscribed.

Q. What is the cost of an engraved Memorial?

A. As of 2019, the cost for inscribing these names is \$500. The cost is likely to increase in future years.

Q. I am interested in reserving a niche and/or an engraved memorial. What is the next step?

A. You may call the Parish Center at 304-876-6436 and someone will contact you to assist with your reservation.